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## Editorial

### A different kind of Swiss bank..

As an avid shortwave radio listener of Swiss Radio International, I have recently heard some very interesting statistics relating to last year.

As expected Swiss Banks have been reporting record profits. But one of these **financial institutions with a difference** made just 90,000 Francs last year. It's an **alternative bank** which believes making money isn't its main priority. (What unexpected news don't you think?)

The bank was founded almost 10 years ago and is based in Olten. This alternative bank has had its ups and downs. But over the past 4

years it has been steadily growing particularly in the French speaking part of Switzerland. It sticks out from the crowd in the banking world by its fundamental philosophy. The bank sees its mission in giving credit for mortgages and **to those small companies which have social and ecological principles**. The money people invest must serve **to support a sustainable economy** and not be directed into the financial market, where risks admittedly are fewer. Profit is important but not the be-all and end-all. The profit serves to show a certain credibility. Projects which the alternative bank supports include **housing, farms producing organic products, small companies and enterprises managed by**

**women**. The emphasis is always on social and ecological responsibility. The bank describes 1999 as a year of transition.

Staff numbers have been increased, 35 structures have been changed and investment has been made in updated information technology. It's a strategy geared to the future. Ten years ago the banking world and financial journalists didn't take the alternative bank very seriously. It's still only a small fish in the banking pond, but the big fish have learned the lesson; that there are **niches with social and ecological products in their own portfolios**.

While profit in the year 99 is down on the previous year, the bank says that this isn't a sign of weakness in the market place. It's rather the expression in figures of the measures taken to control future growth.

All in all a benevolent institution in a world of harsh commercialism. - Something to 'shout about' as an attribute of our country of origin, don't you think?

### President's Message

Change is a part of life - and this is currently the case at our Embassy. On behalf of the Swiss Society, we are pleased and delighted to be able to warmly welcome our new Ambassador, **Mrs Silvie Matteucci**, to New Zealand. We look forward to the continued cordial and friendly relationship which we have always enjoyed with our Swiss Embassy, and await the opportunity of meeting Mrs Matteucci in the near future.

Sadly, though, it is also a time to say goodbye, or perhaps farewell, to our current Swiss Society Patron and Chargé d'Affaires, **Walter Simmen**, as he moves on to new duties after nearly five years in New Zealand. We have always been very fortunate to be able to enjoy a good rapport with our Embassy, and I'd like to thank you, Walter, for the services and support you personally gave to both our Swiss Society, as well as to the Swiss community in general. But our loss is Houston's gain, so I wish you a prosperous future on your upcoming move to Texas. I'm sure you will be leaving New Zealand with an abundance of happy memories and experiences. Bon Voyage!

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## SWISS SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Swiss Society invites all members and friends to attend the Annual General Meeting, to be held on Sunday, 4th June 2000, at 1.30 pm (Queen's Birthday Weekend)

at the Clubhouse on the Swiss Farm of the Auckland Swiss Club, Kaukapakapa

### AGENDA

1. Welcome by the President
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the previous AGM (31 May 1998) (printed in May Helvetia) and Matters Arising
4. Obituaries
5. President's Report and Matters Arising
6. Editor's Report and Matters Arising
7. Address by the Patron of the Society
8. Financial Report and Matters Arising
9. Delegate for Swiss Abroad's Report and Matters Arising
10. Riflemaster's Report and Matters Arising
11. Setting of Subscriptions for 2000/01 Financial Year
12. Election of Officers (President / Vice President / Secretary / Treasurer / Editor)
13. Election of Society Committee and Co-Options
14. General Business
  - Club Reports
  - Other
15. Setting of date and venue for Society AGM, 2001
16. Meeting Closure.

### Directions to the Club Farm at Kaukapakapa:

Exit the Northern Motorway at Albany/Massey University, go through Albany, further towards north until Dairy Flats. At the Caltex Petrol Station/Vegetable Shop a sign post indicates a left turn towards Kaukapakapa. Follow that road for about 10km, past Waitoki (BP Petrol station) until Rapson Road turns off to the right. A metal road leads you for about 4km up into the country - at the end of it is "The Farm". Signposts with the Swiss Flag will be placed in strategic places.

With the upcoming Society AGM in Auckland early next month, I am also once again looking forward to catching up with many "old" friends, as well as hopefully meeting new members. The AGM is our one opportunity each year of bringing the Swiss community together in one place, so I encourage all members to converge on Auckland at Queen's Birthday Weekend. Use this ideal chance to meet fellow Swiss and make new friends, or rekindle existing ones, as well as enjoy the beautiful bush surroundings of the Auckland Club's "Swiss Farm". Beatrice

## Swiss Society Annual General Meeting Queen's Birthday Weekend 4.6.2000

### Programme

#### Swiss Farm, Kaukapakapa

9.30 am - Cowbell Competition Finals, followed by Lunch

1.30 pm - Society AGM and Cowbell Presentation

4.00 pm - Departure from 'Farm'

To celebrate our yearly meeting, the Auckland Swiss Club is inviting everyone to an **Evening of Folklore**, at the **Alexander Park Function Centre**

6.00 pm - Apero

7.00 pm - Buffet Dinner, followed by Entertainment by the Swiss Kiwi Yodelers, and Dance to the sounds of the Holzhacker Band, till the early hours.

**Folklore Evening Ticket Price- \$45 per Person**

**Tickets are selling now!!**

For further information and bookings please contact your Club representative, or call us direct:

- Trudi Fill (09) 376 4923, or

Rolf Bertschi (09) 444 2970

**We look forward to welcoming you in beautiful Auckland!**

### Directions to Alexandra Raceway Function Centre:

This is situated about 2km from the Greenlane Motorway exit. Follow Greenlane towards Manukau Road, and turn right into Gate B just before Manukau Road.

The Function Centre is on the fifth floor, overlooking the race track.



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